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Florida’s Forgotten British Legal Past

Posted on [13/06/2016](#) by [John Cairns](#)

On 10 May, 2016, Professor Matthew Mirow of the Florida International University School of Law, presented an important MacCormick Seminar in Edinburgh under the above title. Other than by a few specialists, it is generally forgotten that Florida was ceded by Spain to Great Britain in 1763 (in return for getting back British-occupied Havana), only returning to Spain in 1783. Its inhabitants did not participate in the more northern colonies’ rebellion against the British Crown. It was divided into two; East Florida and West Florida. Each initially had a Scottish Governor. Professor Mirow, drawing on new archival research, discussed the working of the English-style legal system during the British era in East Florida, which was governed from the ancient town of St Augustine. Professor Mirow has shown there is a complex and interesting legal history with important implications for our understanding of the British and post-British period in Florida.

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